

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

For Cooperative Vegetation and Habitat Mapping and Classification

June 1, 2000

I. Preamble

In keeping with the policies and principles of the California Biodiversity Council, the signatories mutually agree by this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a cooperative vegetation and habitat mapping initiative which will facilitate statewide joint data collection and processing, establish common mapping and classification standards across all ownership, and provide timely response to both State and Federal information and analytical requirements.

II. Background

Vegetation is among the most important characteristics of California's natural environment. Vegetation provides food and shelter for the State's terrestrial animal species, aids in the maintenance of aquatic habitats and is the larger community that supports our many unique plant species. Vegetation acts as a filter for the state's watershed lands, provides valuable forest products, economic benefits, and recreational opportunities to the citizens of California. High quality data are critical for the preservation, management and risk assessment of California's ecosystems and the vegetation upon which we all depend.

Agencies involved in this MOU have intermingled responsibilities and often produce vegetation, habitat maps and classification systems in their ongoing activities in different ways. Such maps help to pinpoint habitat and species likely to be affected in any given planning area by management decisions. They also provide critical information necessary to identify and prioritize vegetation and habitat conservation activities. Coordinating efforts across the state will improve the efficiency in the use of public funds to meet our shared responsibilities. This combined effort will improve access to data, provide greater consistency in how data are developed, and meet the on-the-ground needs of field staff. A statewide effort to facilitate more standardized mapping, and classification of vegetation and habitat will produce more compatible data across administrative boundaries.

III. Goals, Strategies and Objectives

The goals of this MOU are to establish and maintain statewide vegetation and habitat data layers of known accuracy in compliance with the National Vegetation Classification System (NVCS).

The strategies consist of collaboration with data sub committees, and others in the following areas:

- Sharing of and access to vegetation information and technical expertise.
- Identification and implementation of classification and mapping priorities, including accuracy assessments.
- Cost sharing and/or in-kind services to implement identified priorities.

Specific objectives include:

- Develop common standards for data content, data capture methods, field procedures, accuracy assessment and documentation.
- Complete a hierarchical vegetation classification system adaptable to varying goals of the signatories and improve vegetation and habitat classification and crosswalks between systems
- Complete and maintain a vegetation map of all public and private lands in California on a regional basis through interagency cooperative efforts as the basis for vegetation inventories and assessments of habitats, including detection of changes.

IV. Principles of Agreement

Agency staffs agree to participate in a Core Group to coordinate implementation of the goals and objectives of this MOU. Agency staffs also agree to communicate through periodic meetings of the Science Coordinating Committee for Vegetation.

V. Authority

This MOU does not modify or supersede existing statutory direction of the signatories.

VI. Modifications

This Memorandum is to remain in effect until modified by the parties in writing. It is negotiable at the option of any of the parties.

VII. Termination

Any party may terminate their participation in this MOU at any time when all parties are notified in writing.


VIII. Non-Binding Obligations

This MOU is a declaration of policy and represents the intent of the parties in principle only. It is not binding on the parties. In the event the parties to this MOU desire to formalize the principle intent of this MOU, they will enter into a fully integrated agreement at a later time.

IX. Completion Date

This MOU is effective for each participating agency upon signature date shown below.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
For Cooperative Vegetation and Habitat Mapping and Classification



Mary D. Nichols
Secretary for Resources
The Resources Agency

Date 9/19/00



Andrea E. Tuttle
Director
California Department of
Forestry and Fire Protection

Date 7-19-00




Robert C. Hight
Director
California Department of
Fish and Game

Date 8-17-00



for Brad Powell
Regional Forester
Pacific Southwest Region
USDA Forest Service

Date 9/20/00



Lester A. Snow
Regional Director
Mid-Pacific Region
Bureau of Reclamation
U.S. Department of the Interior

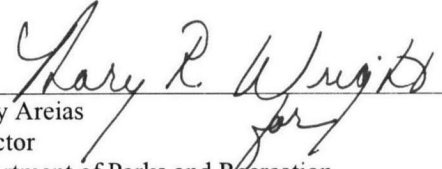
Date 9-7-00



Al Wright
State Director
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior

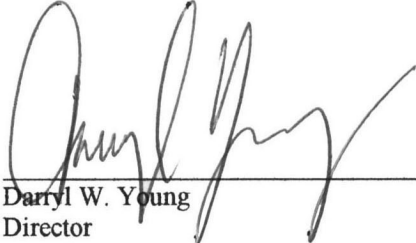
Date 7/6/00

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
For Cooperative Vegetation and Habitat Mapping and Classification




Rusty Areias
Director
Department of Parks and Recreation

Date 9/18/00



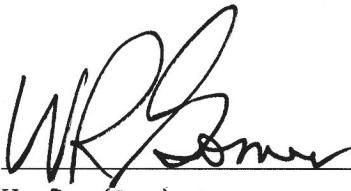
Darryl W. Young
Director
Department of Conservation

Date 7/21/00



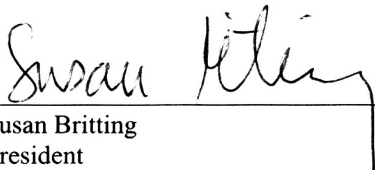
Mike Spear
Manager
California/Nevada Operations
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Date 9/19/00



W. R. (Reg) Gomes
Vice President -- Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of California

Date 2-5-01



Susan Britting
President
California Native Plant Society

Date 31 October 2001